

[Mr. Wm. McDonald]

[?] DUP

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Ruby E. Wilson ADDRESS [?] West Front St.

DATE SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Mr. Wm. McDonald, North Platte, Nebr.
2. Date and time of interview numerous and extensive
3. Place of interview usually his private office, McDonald State Bank
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant
5. Name and adress of person, if any accompany you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. [???

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Ruby E. Wilson ADDRESS R #1 West Front

DATE SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mr. Wm McDonald, North Platte, Nebraska

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth June 14, 1861, Cotton Wood Springs, Shorter or Lincoln County

Library of Congress

3. Family A brother in Omaha and a sister Mrs. Reynolds of North Platte
4. Place and date of birth Nebraska has always been his home
5. 5. Education, with dates
6. Occupation and accomplishments, with dates President of McDonald State Bank
7. Special skills and interests Masonic Rotarian and a number of lodges etc. Loves to talk of old times and is an authority of this locality.
8. Community and religious activities
9. Description of informant Small, very energetic, talks very rapidly and rambling and only half finishes a thought before he tries to express another. Every interview with him was very exhausting perhaps because of the realisation on his part that few were in a position to have seen the development of this country from such a vantage point as his fathers home and business by the "old trail" and Fort and later in other business interests. I evaluate every half half sentence and endeavoured to catch it all. Mr McDonald has been very patient with my efforts. He mentioned his intention to give his old ledger to Nebraska State Historical Society. He also owns an autobiography written by Colonel Bill Cody and numerous momentos. A few items follow from the old day book or ledger which was kept by his father while at Cotton wood Springs trading post. The first entry is dated January 2, 1862, January 15, E. J. Parsons, [James?] Erwin drove 1 wagon on trip to Omaha, they worked for father.

Another reads "Oct. 11, Cap't Nick o'Brien. Lieutenant [Ware?] Lieutenant Brewer commenced boarding."

Another "Sept. 17, 1863 Cap't Hammar arrived and took board and lodging."

Library of Congress

"Cap't Hammond for U.S. took stable and hay for 35 animals belonging of U. S. Sept. 18 A.M."

"Sept. 29, 1863. Cap't E. Hammer to 5 meals by Seargent Chaplain 2 horses to hay."

"Lieutenant George Heath at noon commenced boarding Sept. 27, 1863."

"Mayor George M. o'Brien commenced boarding and lodge Sept. 27, 1863."

"Oct. 4 Major G. o'Brien left off boarding after breakfast."

He has an old Pacific Telegraph in Chas. McDonald wired D. J. McCann at Omaha (his father) to allow Sam Watts an additional sum of \$5000.00 which would be paid by drawing upon him. It was for Stock to start his [butler?] store at the New Fort Sedgwick.

Mr. McDonald also has in his possession an early "ticket of the Union Pacific R.R. dated May 8, 1871 there are still a few miles to ride on it. It lacks too days of being stamped just 2 years after the last spike was driven." Also a file of old notes, "1 by Old Alex Majors who owned 7500 head of work cattle and 6900 wagons." He was the man Buffalo Bill went to work for. He built the Pony Express. He gave everybody a bible who worked for him and made them sign a pledge that they "wouldn't cuss, drink, chew or smoke or anything else, so he made them break it too," said Mr. McDonald. [?]

Mr. William H. McDonald

My father was not a story teller. He was conservative therefore that which he said could be none other than it as he said it. My father was born in 1826 Oct. 26. The year the second and third U. S. Presidents died. My father was a poor man when he came here. A man hauled all he owned in one wagon box. Nebraska was still a territory when he came here in 1860 January 15. Lincoln County was not then known as Lincoln but Shorter County

Library of Congress

of Nebraska territory, after Congressman William B. Shorter of Tennessee. The Civil War came on and changed things about, Shorter County was renamed Lincoln County.

My father settled at Cotton Wood Springs and when you hear the name Fort [?], remember that they are one and the same. It wasn't long before my father had a stockade 8 feet high and 225 x 300 ft. built of red cedar — the corral was 75 yards East and West and 100 North and South. The fort wasn't established until '63 and as my father was here first and the rule was that the town and the fort couldn't be built together, he told them where they could build. They built fort McPherson at Cotton Wood Springs but about 40 rods from my father's place. Captain Nick o'Brien, Lieutenant Wafe and Lieutenant Brewer had charge of establishing the fort.

I was a small tad then. In October we heard the beat of drums and fife and here came the cavlary! They came to my father's ranch (Charles McDonald) until they could built their barracks, but three weeks I guess until the privates had their quarters though the officers still continued to stay at our ranch. In my father's old day book and diary which I possess, are the names of some of those officers, Cap't Nicholas o'Brien, 1st Lieutenant of his company, Eugene Wade, who became Commissioner of pensions, prominent 2 under Theodore Roosevelt was 2nd Lieutenant, Brewer was another officer whom I remember. I am often called upon to make speeches and I am put on exhibit as something of the oldest living fossil. It is true that I am the first white child born in Lincoln County. My mother was here over a year before any white woman settled permanently in Lincoln County. Little red boys were my playmates.

Men used to stop at our place on the old Oregon Trail. I have an old ledger my father kept and I knew most of the men whose names are entered there. One is Samuel F. Watts who was a surveyor, was in the 2nd Territorial legislature with my father.

A Another reads "Ben Gallagher, set into supper, Oct. 30, 1863." He later was one of the Paxton and Gallagher firm.

Library of Congress

I knew 3 pony express riders. I visited one when I went to California, Uncle Billy Campbell was the last living rider.

When I was just a baby my mother was asked by an Indian to loan me to them. My mother had learned about the Indians dispositions and was told that if she refused they were likely to steal me as that was their way. So mother asked him when he would bring me back, he said, "Weh the sun was this high," and held his hand to his waist line. Mother watched the suns position and a man rode near the Indian camp most of the afternoon as if he were hunting stray horses. At the designated time the Indian returned me safely to my mother. (Cotton Wood Springs, Lincoln County)

In the 1860's 50,000 people a season were estimated to have traveled through going to the western gold mines and over the Oregon trail. My mother, Mrs. McDonald, in traveling 10 miles on one occasions counted 1200 wagons. I can remember seeing wagons in an endless line all day long, passing our ranch.

3

Ben Gallagher was the first Post Sutler at Cotton-Wood Springs. He had a ranch down there later. Sam Watts was the 1st Post [?] Sutler at Fort Sedgwick.

Woodman and Snell were the next [?] [?] then Ed [Welsh?] at Fort McPherson.

Ben Gallagher sold out about Oct. ['60?] to Woodman and Snell and came here to North Platte to open a store.

One time a man and his brother had been in Colorado mining and they had about \$30,000 with them they'd made in Colorado, they'd just come in and John Gilman came over in a wagon with 3 dead men in the box and his sister-in-law in the seat with him. The Indians had killed the man, they were working for him, and they'd gotten afraid of the Indians burning them out so they'd hurried over. That was the first this man ever saw the young woman. He finally got her, married her about 3 years later at nebraska City. That

Library of Congress

couple was 92 when I visited them in Stockton California 4 years ago. His name was Billy Campbell and he was the last of the original Pony Express riders. He died about a year ago. My father was the first County Judge. I saw not long ago in the paper a notice of death of the woman, but they had a 60th wedding celebration in California and he sent me the great long clipping with the notation around it "your father married us."

Jackson, an old photographer, between 95 and 100 years old stopped in 1866 at our ranch at Cotton Wood Springs and he has been here to the rodeo's not more than 3 or 4 years ago.

Fort North Platte of which one building of the officers quarters has been moved may still be seen, a low little yellow house on Front and just west of Willow, facing North.

The Sioux estimated they had 20 or 30 thousand warriors and they objected to so many transversing roads through their territory. General Mitchell tried 4 to make a treaty with the Indians and held a big pow-wow 2 miles from the Fort. The Sioux on the West and the Pawnees on the other. Sam Watts who used to rock my cradle interpreted. The Indians made nasty signs across at each other, the Pawnees hated the Sioux which was mutual and the General failed in his effort toward a treaty.

Immediately after the pow-wow at which the Indians had been so hostile toward each other as well as non conciliatory, a company of the 7th Iowa Cavalry was sent out from Fort McPherson to build Fort Sedgwick, Colorado. Cy Fox was a private who went, he is still living and I guess I'm about the only person who was in the county before he was. He came with the 7th Iowa Cavalry.

We often saw the stage coaches come in all shot up and one time Homer Woodman was coming out from Omaha to clerk for Cap Hancock. The 1st Masonic lodge was over my father's store and I met a man in Florida, (Homer Woodman) father was prominent in Masonic lodge, (so have I been). This man lived in Dayton, Ohio. He wrote a letter to

Library of Congress

Platte Valley Lodge here about what I'm going to tell you. Carl Grieson Beeory(?) of the Masonic fraternity here put it in the minutes at that time.

There had been an Indian uprising and In 1864 the Indians had burned many of the ranches between Fort Kearney and Denver and what few people there still were in the country got to a well fortified place as fast as they could. I was still a small tot when that occurred. My mother took me in August, 1864, and went to Omaha on the stage. She stayed two months during which time there was no coach running out this way, but she came back on the first coach that was allowed through, and had no trouble whatever, but the next stage was attacked several times and had one horse killed by the Indians.

5

The stage stations were about 12 to 16 miles apart. The second coach was attacked though nothing had happened to the first In which my mother was bringing me back; one horse was killed and a man was wounded, they cut the tugs to the dead horse and had a running fight with the Indians to the John Gillman ranch 12 wiles East of the Fort. The stage had expected the soldiers to meet them and escort them from the stage station on to Cotton Wood Springs. Homer Woodman was on that stage and the letter recalls it.

Major Walker of Company [?]. 5th Cavalry came with Buffalo Bill who was in the battle of Sumit Springs. Cody based his last show on that battle. Major Walker told me about that battle later.

Bill Cody was a big man 6 ft. 2 in. tall, weighing 226 lb. He was appointed Chief of Scouts under command of General Mitchell in '63 at Fort McPherson.

The 5th Cavalry were sent out from Fort McPherson after a band of Indians that had attacked a Swedish settlement near Salina Kansas and killed about everybody and carried away two women. Cody who was chief of Scouts was sent as guide. Major Frank North and Captain Luther North and a group of Pawnee Scouts went along.

Library of Congress

Luther North said Cody wasn't present and Major Walker told me they were. But from what those men told me I have figured that the Indians were so heavily overloaded with loot that there were several divisions of them and the scouts were separated and for that reason [?] may not have known of the other Scouts out. But the Indians scattered stolen articles along all the way from Kansas to Summit Springs. Cody and Major Walker went ahead to where they could see the Sioux and they sent back word to General [Gar?]. They overtook and surprised the Indians and had a battle and got back 1 white woman but the squaws killed the other before they could rescue her 6 and injured the one they rescued. A curious thing about it was that they recovered \$1200, from the Indians among other loot and they gave it to the white woman which probably helped her to get a husband quickly.

That was the battle of Summit Springs. Cody says he killed Tall Bill and Lute says he did. But It had been a hard chase and the men were tired out when they got back.

Cody suggested to the General that he loosen upon his discipline and let the soldiers have some recreation. About the only possible entertainment to Western man was to get drunk. Cody probably drank enough to float a battleship but he didn't drink any the last 9 years of his life. At the Post Sutler Store there was the general recreation room for the soldiers and on the other side was the officers bar all kept by the Post Sutler.

The upshot of the whole thing was that there weren't hardly enough sober fellow to lead the horses to water. Ed Welsh was the sutler. After the fellows got onto such a toot he said to the General, "My God, we've got to stop this loose discipline or there'll be a Government investigation. I've put out guards and we've got to stop these men drinking. You've got to give me an order not to sell any more liquor without an order." Then told Cody to get out about 75 miles South and scout around and see if the Indians were up to any devilment. Of course it was a hoax to get Cody away from Camp but Cody said "Why that a dry country out there and you want to send me out without anything to drink. A man would die of thirst out there without something to drink etc." He finally got the order for a bottle of whisky. He was clever enough to go to the Sutlers at noon when Ed Welsh was out and his brother

Library of Congress

Frank was taking care of the bar. He saw a gallon demijon on the shelf and he said, "Give me that." Frank 7 probably didn't know about the going's on, anyhow Cody cut all the wicker fancies away with his knife so that it was just a bottle. When Frank told him he couldn't have it, that he was only supposed to get a bottle which would have been a half pint or pint. There followed a dispute as to whether the demijon was a bottle or a demijon with Cody innocently proclaiming the demijon to be a bottle since it had no trimmings. He won out and took his excess to his quarters and filled an empty regular size bottle to carry before the officers. He went out into the hills right near by and folled around that afternoon. He came back and rode into the corrall which was in the South West corner where the loose mules and horses were kept. As usual he got to telling stories, this time about how he had worked the Welch's for the liquor.

He noticed the fellows fussing around and turned and found the General standing in the door. General said, "Cody, I want to talk to you." He had to walk with the General to the officers quarters and finally through to the west end of the Generals quarters. There the General rang for his nigger and ordered the materials to mix drinks and cigars and invited Cody to sit down. He conversed about this, and that, but Cody didn't have much to say. Finally when he was dismissing him he said, "That was a good story I overheard you tell at the corralls but don't try it again!"

Col. Bill Cody liked to have a dinner for some of his friends and would then sit down and smoke and tell stories, and could he tell them! He had never gone to school after 12 years of age yet met most of all of the crown heads of Europe. If there were only 3 men in a party and he was one of them he'd be telling stories and they'd be listening.

Cody's 2 brothers died in boyhood. I met his 4 sisters and knew some of them well. He married Louise [Frederici?] if Saint Louis, Mo. about March 6, 1866.

Library of Congress

Mrs. Goodman was his eldest sister and May the youngest, about 17 when she came. I used to esquire for May, she was a belle. I carried notes to her from some of her flames at the Fort. May was about 7 years older than I. Mother knew Cody's sisters and chaperoned some of them. Mrs. Cody and his sisters never got along well. That's what the big fight was about. But I told Bill he couldn't get a divorce. I said "Bill you'll get beaten, he had crooked lawyers and I even think the court was crooked, they never divorced. Fred Garlo is Cody's last son-in-law, live at Cody Wyoming.

One time Cody had a dinner out at the ranch over by the river for a few of us, Father (Chas. McDonald) Luke Haley, myself (Will McDonald) and another one or two in '93. I had heard we were to have buffalo meat and I was anxious to taste it again.

We were served fine steaks but I kept wondering when the buffalo meat was coming in. When it was served I said "Ah, this tastes better than it did when I was a boy," and it was delicious, tender and fat. The saying used to be "We were going out to get a buffalo lump," that was the best part of the meat but this was just as good, meat from a young heifer sent up from Pawnee Bills ranch in Oklahoma. Pawnee Bill was Cody's pardner in the Wild West Show and owned a big ranch in Oklahoma and kept a lot of buffalo. We used to have jerked buffalo, dried meat that a man put in his pocket and could chew on all afternoon. It was good and it was strengthening. A Piece of meat 3/4 inch wide and 4 or 5 inches wide would be put out for drying. It dried as hard as sole leather and dark colored. If it was an old bull buffalo it made some real chewing. It was tough. Bill's ranch in Oklahoma. Pawnee Bill was Cody's pardner in the Wild West show, and had a big ranch in Oklahoma.

9

Once a Knights Templar preacher of the Masonic lodge had died and was to be buried. Cody was also Mason and was walking with the Episcopal clergyman who was lame, had a bum toe or something and I was marching along in the rear of Col. Cody. I was striking Cody's heels frequently and he remarked, "I thought I'd walk with the Dr. because he has a 'bum wheel' but I don't seem to be able to keep out of Will's (my) way." We had marched

Library of Congress

all the way to the cemetery in a blissard and you know we had no streets then. After we got out of there the preacher said," I see the Col. carriage waiting. I think Mrs. Cody has a turkey waiting for me (it was Thanksgiving Day). He said "I might be a cavalryman but I would never join the infantry."

I am not a man who saw "the prairies black with buffalo." For one thing the majority of buffalo stayed around the canyons and the creeks, away from traveled roads. The greatest buffalo hunt ever staged, I [think?] was when the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia came to North Platte on January 12, 1872. For days the entire country was making preparations for that hunt. General Sheridan was in command of this entire territory and sent word to prepare for the visit. He wanted Cody to persuade the Indians to be on hand. Cody knew that was no snap. They had just been in North Platte to trade. Cody knew Spotted Tail and his Indians were over on the Medicine creek somewhere. He started out alone and traveled hard all day, he saw horses up on the creek and knew the Indians were camped near. So he waited until dark and wrapped himself into a blanket and rode in like an indian. Tod Randal a squaw man was a kind of private secretary to the Old Chief Spotted Tail so Cody got in and got the old chief's ear. "Great white man wants a big hunt with the Indians."

10

Old Spotted Tail was more than pleased and had Cody stay in his teppee over night. The Indians put on a big show and they had the most famous buffalo hunt ever held. There were lots of buffalo In the hills and aslate as '77 there were lots of buffalo.

At that time and not until much later there were no cow-boys and no ranch cattle, just a few milch cows and work oxen. Men were known as Western men and wore broad rather flat hats.

Chas. McDonald, my father, and his brother-in-law, my mother's brother ran a whole-sale grocery business in Cheyenne when the RR first came.

Library of Congress

Not a soul here now the lights of North Platte as early as I, about April [?], '67.

Chas. McDonald sold his ranch to the Government and came to North Platte about April of '72 and my father started a store here In North Platte about Oct. '73. Prices were way up until after we got out goods in October and then went way down to a panic caused by the Resumption of [?] payment by John Sherman an Secy. of the U. S. Treasury.

I drove 3 yoke of oxen when we moved to North Platte. I was a boy 10 years old and I used to practice popping the bull whip hour after hour. I was known as the youngest bull whacker In the country. You can whack bulls without cussing but I'd give about \$500.00 if I never cussed again.

I attended two funerals for Cody and helped lay him away and that night Mrs. Cody cried and threw her arms around my neck and kissed me. She had known me a long time, since I was a small boy. Bill Cody used to talk to me; especially on stormy days and tell me of instance after instance.

Bill Cody was about 23 years old when I first knew him. He was born Feb. [26?], 1846, I was born Jan. 14, 1861. There was about as much difference in his age my age as there was between my father and him.

11

I know Cody well. My father financed Cody's first show and all of them probably. Father bought his first land here at North Platte for him and paid for it all finally. It consisted of land beginning at the S.E. corner of the Sherman and Front and running N. across the R.R. tracks and eventually after having bought out the homesteaders who dried out, his land ran clear to the river.

Library of Congress

Horton Hall married Arta, Cody's daughter and the one before, [Crra?] was named for my mother and died at 18 years of age. Ira, Crra and Kit Carson, his only son died at 6 years of age, all are buried in an old cemetery, [?] [?] in New York.

May, his sisters name Is May Cody Bradford Decker and [Sellie?] wrote a book on Cody's life under the name of Hellen Cody Westmore.

Cody's oldest brother was killed by a pony falling on him. Their home was in Kansas and his father was a strong abolitionist, he made a speech that night and stirred up a lot of gorilla opposition and they hunted for him, he was stabbed but he stayed hidden and once he heard them coming and got on a pony and got away, he would have to go to Fort Leavenworth for protection and the women would have to get up out of bed and the men hunted for Bills father. One time Bill heard they were on the way and made a hard ride to warn his father. His father finally died from the stabbing and after him mother died Bill brought his sister to the fort.

My dearest friend went with Cody's oldest daughter. My Father and Mother visited Cody in Rochester, New York when he was on the Stage.

While Billy Cody was about 11 years old he was employed as corral-boy with a freight outfit carrying supplies to General Conner at Salt Lake. This was a bull train or drawn with oxen and the extra oxen always had to be herded.

There is always a bully in any group and when Cody asked for molasses 12 he was given coffee by the bully and the boys wound up in a fight. Bill [?], Will Bill, as he was later known served notice then that he was taking Billy under his wing and that further bullying would have to be answered for him.

Cody was in the Civil War and after the war was made an official scout but during the war Cody stopped at a house where there were a number of women for a meal. He was given a good meal. He ascertained that no man was around and knowing that the soldiers of

Library of Congress

the army which was marching by were likely [around?] to stop and that they were often insulting or unpleasant to women of the Confederate side he stood as though he had been posted as a duly assigned guard until all the soldiers had passed and before he fell in the last of the line Will Bill Hickok rode up and the two friends met again.

Ben Holliday was a stage coach man, he made a fortune and finally owned about 16 sea going vessels.

Old man Miller said out in Portland, "I had a friend and his name was John Holliday, a brother of Ben Holliday famous in the early days as the Holiday stage coach company when Russel Majors and Weddel finally took it over..

John said, "You know I think that brother of mine is the smartest man I ever knew and when I want to borrow a hundred he won't let me have, I think he's the god-damndest fool I ever saw."

I spent New years after noon 1872 in Anna Kramph's fathers store.

Pennisler and Miller had the first log house on the corners of 6th and Jeffers of North Platte.

Lord Oglby was an English capitalist. Sidney Lillon was President of R.R. Isaac Dillon died here and ranch on West.

Sid D. Dexter

13

Joseph to McConnell master mechanic

T. J. Folley a merchant.

Library of Congress

Guy C. Barton who lives here and built the Barton Home (occupied as the office of the Waltemath Coal and Lumber Company, went to Omaha and went into some business in Omaha.

Later Dillon used to come out and go hunting with Barton then bought out the other Interest and Barton and Dillon were pardners. Dillon bought up R.R. land at \$1.00 an acre because being R. R. president he did about as he pleased. He combined the 4 Englishmen and formed the Platte Valley Land and Water Co.

Hershey was a homesteader who later combined with Paxton and put in a ditch and brought in a colony of Swedes to raise garden seeds. But when Hershey lived there, there was no town.

Paxton and Hershey owned several 1000 acres of land over on the North river. Hershey was named after J. L. Hershey who brought in the Swedish colony.

[Bill Paxton was quite a character, was an old freighter, used to be a wagon boss of a freight outfit from Omaha to Denver, Paxton didn't build the Paxton hotel thought it has been commonly believed so. When they built it they lacked about \$1500. He put it in and the Hotel was named after him.?)

Millard was another capitalist, his son Joseph H. Millard was a Senator and banker. Cody had been to England and had imported 600 head of fine [for?] ford cattle but there wasn't enough water and his cattle didn't do well, had no irrigation. Horton Boal was Cody's son-in-law, his oldest daughter, Arta, had married, he was manager of the ranch for Cody. He had found out it wasn't much fun.

Library of Congress

Boal asked me what I thought he should do about those cattle. I said, "I'll tell you what to do, [wather?] than land and put it into alfalfa for your cattle, but," I said, "you can't pay \$500 for 160 acres for waters"

Dillon owned land West of Cody's West ranch, along the river. I told him, "Dillon knows about ditches now and he was out of that business. I was going to the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893 and would see Cody, where he was with his show in Chicago, Boal told me Cody wanted to see me when I went to Chicago."

The Colonel was in his tent, I went to his private quarters. Mrs. Cody was there and some other North Platte folks. He took me into the back room of his private tent and gave me cigars and I told him about the ditch. He said it looked good and I said, "Now there are a lot of people who aren't under that ditch, maybe you can sell them." After the Show and Fair closed he went on a toot and spent about \$10,000. He treated everybody, all the scalawags, cowboys and all. But I can understand it, he was always generous, when he was drunk he pushed money out with both hands.

When I got back, we drove all around and looked things over. I talked to W. I. [?] who was a Ass't Superintendent out here on the R. R.

He organised the Farmer's & Merchants ditch because Dillon wanted to charge too much for water.

There was still the old ditch Co, but under a new manager, Seeberger and he went right to work to bust the Farmers and Merchants, wanted to take the headgate out on Paxton and Hershey place and he wanted to bust up the place.

Park was president of the new ditch col and he resigned rather than jeopardise his job with the R.R. by involvement in a despite. Charles F.

Library of Congress

Iddings was made president and they built the ditch.

Bill Park was my dearest friend and he started Bill Jeffers (the present president of the UFRR) on his way as a messenger boy.

On a cloudy day father who was in bed with rheumatism was called on by an officer, Lieutenant Brewer. He turned to me and asked "How would you like to have a pony?" I think father thought he was just making small talk, but when he was ready to go he said, "Send a man up to the Fort, we captured a pony from the Sioux Indians, the boy may as well have it." It was a little spotted Indian pony, incidentally the grandson of that pony was stolen back by the Sioux in 1879.

In June of 1871 a hired man who worked for my father, (Jack Foster who had been an old soldier from old Fort Phil Kearney) and I put 20 head of horses and mules over on Brady Island on the East end which is about half way to Maxwell.

Two weeks later the Indians stole those horses and took them past the old 96 ranch which had been the old Ben Holiday stags station. Alexander Jester who married Nellie Cody was manager of the ranch.

The darkey was down there on a round up for Major Walker with Major Woodhunt and they came to the ranch and found tracks leading up a canyon. Tho [ni er?] said he'd go up the canyon and see waht became of the horses. He didn't come back. The horse he was riding was found badly wounded but nothing was seen of the man.

About a year later John Wilson was hunting and shot an antelope, wounding it but it got away. In following the wounded animal he saw buzzards. Investigating he found a corpse that was identified at the coroners inquest as that of the negro by the officers buttons from an army coat that the Major had loaned or given to the negro. He had been shot 16 three

Library of Congress

times through the head. But they followed the trail of the Indians with the horses at the time they were looking for the negro.

The Indians had passed the 96 ranch as it was then and keeping to the steepest canyons, some of them straight down, they had herded them along and circled within 1 1/2 miles of the Fort. How they ever got past there without being seen or getting caught I don't know.

Jack Foster and Officers and men trailed them and found where they jumped them into the river and about a mile up, where they took them out on the other side.

Father sent a man up to the Spotted Tail agency, he felt so sure the horses were there. He was finely paid for some of the horses but it was about 10 years before they even started to investigate.

The woman who was appointed to take the testimony was nominated under Cleveland's 2nd administration for the presidency of the U.S. She was the first and only woman ever so nominated. She had a homestead East away.

Her name was Mary Leekwood. When she came the last time father submitted some more testimony but I said, "Why do you keep coming? Everybodys died off that knew anything about it. I helped put the horses there, I could almost tell you their names. `of them were work mules. She took my statements and that was finally what they paid on.

I rode clear into Omaha in a covered wagon before the Rail Road came with my sister and mother and father. I don't know how long it took to make the trip but we carried grain for our horses, there were two wagons, while the freight lived on the forage along the way and had to take more time to camp.

Father went to Saint Louis and bought goods for the store and a two horse phaeton and harness, he paid \$550.00 for it and shipped it by boat 17 as everything was shipped to Omaha. It was rolled out on a carload of rails and it cost \$550.00 freight to bring up to

Library of Congress

10 miles this side of Grand Island which was the end of the newly laid U.P.R.R. tracks. I remember there was some kind of temporary eating place. Father had men and teams meet us. I doubt it there is anybody living who rode on the U.P. that far as early as I did. I remember of going with father to Brady Island when the R.R. got up that far.

Jules Benti was a trader for whom Julesburg Colorado was named. I used to hear old Sam Watts, William A. Paxton and my father, talk of how Jack Slade killed Jules Benti. Sam Watts died December of '85. He had helped organize Frontier County and surveyed the County and got the bill through the legislature. He was a Representative of Lincoln too when he died. He came here with my father from the 2nd legislature before I was born and he rocked my cradle after I was born. I have a tin type picture of him. He was a civil engineer and had surveyed Sioux City and laid it out, there were two factions that couldn't agree on a name, they asked old Sam Watts what to call it and he told them to call it Sioux City.

Hank and Monty Clifford, were both Squaw men, Sam Watts used to laugh he said when Hank came out from the East he had been in the war and it hadn't taken him long to get a squaw. When Monty came out he was disgusted with his brother for living with a squaw but after about a year he got a squaw too. He lived with her all his life and raised a family.

Sam Watts took sick in Christmas week and died at Monty's place. He brought him up here in the cemetery.

Monty Cliffords mother-in-law and [squaw?] was buried in the old cemetery at Stockville. I saw her one time and she had a bigger load of wood on her back than I could get on a horse wagon. I don't know how she ever loaded it herself but she was moving right along and she was past 80.

Library of Congress

A man donated a little log cabin over at Stockville to some historic society. It was the first house built there. he said to me "I got the door casings and window jams from your father at Cotton Wood Springs." That must have been before '70.

I remember yet a Morman woman and a child, a boy about my own age and she came and asked my mother for something to eat for the boy.

I remember distinctly of seeing the carts coming of those Morman people, the women pulled them and sometimes the men laid on the cart. Men were scarce in those days.

Amelia Flosem was from Omaha, mother met her at Omaha and frequently met her enroute. I think probably the Folsom family still owns property in Omaha.

When old Brigham married her the story was told on him that he didn't come down town for 6 months, he like his new wife to well. She was his youngest, newest and favorite.

Another story too of his meeting a little boy on the street and upon asking "whose little boy are you?" the child answered "I am Brigham Young's boy."

One time Cody and a man and wagon boss left their train of supplies for General Connor, U. S. Army at a Fort near Salt Lake, upon nearing Salt Lake and drank water at a Spring or stream when they got up they found themselves looking into guns. The men told them "We burning your train and killing your oxen. If you will agree to leave peacefully you can have two wagons and go. If not we will give you no quarter." The son said, "We are a thousand miles from the Mo. river with winter coming on. You wouldn't turn us loose with no arms for defense?" They were finally given their pistols and they went to old Fort Bridger. There were too many people there and they 19 had to leave in the spring and they probably didn't hardly wait for it to break and they came on and the same thing happened to them again, Lew Simmons saw the Indians coming and said, "Get down and kill your mules and

Library of Congress

hide behind them and save your last round of ammunition." No Western man would run the chance of falling into the hands of Indians alive.

Another time they had killed 3 men down by Plum creek, the McCarthy brothers ran for a slew and lay down and followed the slew into the river and followed along under the banks and out willows to make a raft for the injured man to float along on. Cody was a kid around 12 years of age. It got dark, he was trailing along behind, he looked up and saw an Indian's headdress or war bonnet, pulled his trigger and dead Indian almost fell on him. It was his first Indian. The son told him he had got his Indian. They trailed up the river to Kearney.

Edd Crayton who 1st endowed college built the Telegraph line, a piece of work that has never been duplicated. He took a mule and walked across Wyoming laying out the line.

On July 4, 1860 he was in my father store and it snowed and they had a fire in the store and my Uncle Dr. Charles A. Henry who built the first brick store building in Omaha were building the telegraph line and my father said if the Scotch had held out they'd have got around the world the 5th time.

I found the name of another Uncle James E. Boyd in an old ledger owned by a banker at Kearney. It was very old.

It seems as though I am a link between the days of Jim Bridger who was born in 1807 and Kit Carson born Christmas Eve 1809 and the present. I didn't ask them but I knew those and talked with them who did. There are many whom I can't remember who came to the Post, a General Palmer and